finances, etc. Two references from respectable persons of the locality where the franchise is proposed to be located would also be required to establish the character and antecedents of the applicant.

(vii) A business plan would be prepared taking into account the anticipated minimum level of business/revenue worked out by the Devisional Head for the specific franchise.

(viii) Security Deposit: The security deposit to be provided by the franchisee would be based on the maximum possible level of financial transactions likely be undertaken by the franchisee in a day. The minimum security deposit would be Rs. 10,000 in the shape of a performance bank guarantee.

(ix) Selection: Would be made by a committee comprising the Heads of the concerned Division and a neighbouring Division, based on a report from the Assistant Superintendent/Sub Divisional Inspector (Posts).

2.7 ***Remuneration to franchisee:—***

The franchisee will earn remuneration/commission on the services provided at following rates:

S No	Service	Commission per transaction
1.	Booking of Registered Articles	Rs. 2.00
2.	Booking of Speed Post Articles	Rs. 2.00
3.	Booking of Money Orders	Rs. 3.50
4.	Sale of postage stamps and postal stationery and money order forms	5% of sale amount
5.	Retail Services	40% of commission earned by DoP (rounded off in rupees, to be 40% or less)

Telephone facilities in village panchayats

†3830.SHRI AJAY MAROO: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(a) by when the telephone facility is targeted to be provided in each village panchayat in the country;

(b) whether there is any difficulty in achieving this target in terrorism affected areas;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the action being taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) entered into an agreement with Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) in November, 2004 for provision of Village Public Telephones (VPTs) in remaining 66,822 unconnected villages in the country. This excludes villages having population less than 100, lying in thick forest areas/naxalite infested areas etc. As on 31st March, 2007, out of 66,822 unconnected eligible villages, 46,969 villages have been provided with VPT facility and the remaining 19,853 villages will be provided with VPTs progressively by November, 2007.

(b) to (d) Difficulties are being experienced in providing VPTs in some of the villages in naxalite affected areas of Bastar and Surguja of Chhattisgarh State and Raigarh, Nagaon and Silchar areas in the State of Assam. However, Government is making all efforts to provide telephone facility in such areas.

Reduction in roaming charges

3831. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether a proposal from the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India is under consideration of Government with regard to reduction in roaming charges;

(b) whether the Cellular Operators Association of India is resisting this move to reduce roaming tariffs; and

(c) whether the COAI has contended that telecom tariffs in India are among the lowest in the world and further attempts to regulate roaming tariff would force them to revise upward the regular tariff?